

# Studies in Pali & Buddhism

Editor :- Dr. A. K. Narain

( A homage volume to the memory of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap )





*First Published, 1979*

© A.K. NARAIN

*Distributed by :*

D.K. Publishers' Distributors,  
1, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002.

*Published by :*

B.R. Publishing Corporation,  
461, Vivekanand Nagar,  
Delhi-110052.

*Printed by :*

P.L. Printers,  
C-3/19, Rana Partap Bagh, Delhi-110007.

# Buddhist Challenge and Hindu Response

Y. KRISHNAN

Buddhism posed a serious challenge to Vedic religion in matters of theology, metaphysics and ethics. Vedic Hinduism conceived its gods as possessing cosmic functions of creation and destruction. Gods such as Varuṇa, Indra and Agnī, were described as *dhātṛ* (creator); Varuṇa<sup>1</sup> was conceived as the creator and maintainer of the cosmic law (*ṛta*). The belief in one supreme, omnipotent creator such as Viśvakarmā (creator of the universe), and Prajāpati (Lord of Beings) came to dominate Vedic theology.

All the Brahmanical schools, including those which did not believe in a creator such as the Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika and Pūrva Mīmāṃśa subscribed to the belief in an eternal soul or *ātman*, which may or may not be distinguished from God or *Parmātman*. Buddhism denied the existence of *ātman* as an enduring entity. But here the difference between Buddhist and Brahmanical metaphysics is thin and subtle. As the Buddhists believed in the doctrine of *karma*, they, *a priori*, believed in an entity which had to undergo the consequences of its past *karma* in future existence in the cycle of transmigration. The Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* only brought out that the discriminating and apprehending attributes of consciousness are not abiding in their nature; the constituents of the soul, *puḍgala*, *ātmā*, are also in a state of flux, but nonetheless each soul has a distinctive entity of its own, like an individual who is subject to continuous change or growth in different stages of life: childhood, youth and old-age. Thus the Buddhist belief in the doctrine of *karma* made the doctrine of *anattā* an academic doctrine, subtly different from the doctrine of *ātman* of the rival schools. It was, however, the Buddhist ethics, the law of *karma*, that posed the greatest threat to Vedic Hinduism.

In pre-Buddhist Hinduism, the doctrine of *karma* was not developed. In Vedic

cosmology, the forces of good and evil were deemed to be inherent in the cosmos; thus evil had an independent and co-eval existence with the good. In fact, according to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, both the *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons) were born of Prajāpati. It was, therefore, believed that there was perpetual struggle between the gods (*deva*) and demons (*asura*). Gods triumph over demons not through the performance of superior acts or by good conduct but through sacrifices. The ordinary mortals sought from the gods material benefits and protection against demons and evil spirits. This was to be achieved by propitiating gods with sacrifices performed in accordance with the prescribed rituals and by performing religious ceremonies. There was no concept of good and evil as it developed later. *Puṇya* (good deeds) and *pāpa* (evil deeds) were identified as conformity and non-conformity with sacrificial ritual practices and religious ceremonies. In the *Brāhmaṇas*, the notion of sin is associated almost entirely with ritual errors.<sup>2</sup> ".....sin did not imply an act against gods; it implied an error in ritual practice."<sup>3</sup>

The concept of moral law, truthfulness, honesty, avoidance of violence or injury to fellow creatures by destruction of life and unjust deprivation had not yet been evolved. In fact, even the conduct of Vedic gods could not always be deemed to be ethical. Retribution was not an automatic consequence of certain conduct. Hymns to gods seek remission from the consequences of erring actions. The prayers to Varuṇa<sup>4</sup> beseech him thus :—

"Move far from me

What sins I have committed." (*Rg.* II 28.9)

"If we, as gamblers cheat at play, have cheated, done wrong unwittingly or sinned of purpose,

Cast all these sins away like the loosened fetters, and, Varuṇa,

Let us be thine own beloved." (*Rg.* V 85.8)

"When through our want of thought we violate thy laws, punish us not,  
O God, for that iniquity." (*Rg.* VII. 89.5)

Indra<sup>5</sup> is addressed thus :

"Oh ! let thy pitying soul,

Turn to us in compassion when we praise thee,

And slay us not for one sin or for many.

Deliver us today, tomorrow, every day."

Likewise, the prayer to Agni<sup>1</sup> invokes his mercy :

"Deliver, mighty lord, thy worshippers,

Purge us from the taint of sin, and when we die,

Deal mercifully with us on the pyre,

Burning our bodies with their load of guilt,....."

In the Atharvaveda, demons and evil spirits come to grip the minds of the people. They were driven away or supplicated with the help of *mantras* (incantations), charms, and spells.

It is significant that, even in later Hinduism<sup>7</sup> when the doctrine of *karma*, as ordinarily understood was widely accepted by the different schools of Hinduism, unwitting transgression of *dharma* was regarded as sin (*doṣa*), and lying, breaking an oath, killing a person of low caste, defiling the virginity of a low-caste maiden and adultery were considered minor sins (*upa-pātaka*), whereas murder of a brahmin

(*braṃahatyā*), infanticide (*śiśu-hatyā*), drinking liquor, stealing of gold and sexual relations with one's *guru's* wife, are considered major sins (*mahā-pātaka*). In short, the whole scheme of ethics and gradation of offences is arbitrary.

Towards the later part of the Vedic period, the doctrine of *tapas*, penances, self-mortification, and *dhyāna yoga*, mental concentration, developed as means of acquiring super-normal powers and through such powers securing one's desired objectives from gods. *Tapas* or penance was a system of physical training by which one could develop the capacity to bear and ignore physical pain and suffering, which are manifestations of evil. It was a technique not for curing evil but of conditioning the body to bear it. According to Manu<sup>8</sup>, XI 240,242, "Whatever sins (including mental sins) men commit by thoughts, words and deeds, that they speedily burn away by penance" (or austerities).<sup>9</sup> Likewise, *dhyāna yoga* or mental concentration, was a technique for controlling the mind which could produce tranquility and develop will power to attain one's objectives. According to Vasiṣṭha<sup>9</sup>, XXVI 1-4, by *prāṇāyāma* (breath-control) "sins which we committed during the day and night (by deeds, thoughts or speech) are instantly destroyed."

The object of Vedic *mantras* and sacrifices was the attainment of long life and worldly prosperity. The Upaniṣads radically changed the goal of human endeavour; it became the attempt to find an escape from the endless chain of re-births in different forms in this world, to achieve *mokṣa*—merger of *ātman* (individual soul) with *Parmātmān* (supreme spirit). Hence the Upaniṣads questioned the utility of sacrifices and *tapas* for attaining *mokṣa*, or liberation. But they were exclusively pre-occupied with the means to salvation, viz. *jñāna*, or knowledge. Thus, they did not develop any significant ethics, though they had within them a great potentiality to do so.

Buddhism had also attacked the validity of both the Vedic dogmas—the dogma of sacrifice and the dogma of *tapas*—as the means to overcome evil and attain happiness in life. It had emphasised the cosmic law of cause and effect—*pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), the principle of universal causality. According to Buddhism, this law operates not only in the physical, chemical and biological realms, but also in the moral sphere; just as effects are produced from causes and in turn become the starting point of a new cause, likewise consequences arise from conduct. Good conduct (*punya*) produces good effects or results and evil conduct (*pāpa*) produces evil results: this is the *karmic* law of retribution. *Pratītyasamutpāda* is the generic law of cause and effect; in its specific application in the moral sphere, it is called the doctrine of *karma*: as you sow, so shall you reap; as you do, so shall you bear. It postulates that events which happen in our lives are not accidental or fortuitous but are governed by the law of causality. There are, however, certain significant differences between the operation of this law in the physical world and in the moral sphere. In the physical world, the causative factors produce their results immediately—almost simultaneously. But in the moral sphere, the consequences of actions in deed, word and thought, take time to ripen and manifest themselves. Consequently, it is not possible to relate retribution to specific acts, the consequences or fruits of actions to identifiable earlier actions or conducts of an individual. In other words, there is no objective verification of the law of *karma* as in the case of the physical laws of the universe. This makes the operation of the law of *karma* mysterious; it is *avijñapti* or *adr̥ṣṭa*. It also implies that there could be no specific means of countering

or neutralising the effects of *karma*. The law of *karma* is inexorable in its operation; there is no escape from it.

The operation of the law of *karma* also postulates the existence of an entity, *pudgala* or soul, which is liable to bear its consequences in future births or manifestations.

Here it is essential to distinguish between the ethics of Buddhism, based on *karma*, and the metaphysics of Buddhism. Metaphysics or more precisely, ontology, deals with the question of the ultimate nature of reality, the impermanence of matter and spirit, which are in a constant state of flux. Consequently, all sentient beings (and inanimate matter) are liable to decline and decay. *Tṛṣṇā* or desire for immortality or everlasting life is, however, at the root of the perpetuation of our existence. Suffering arises from the frustration of this desire due to the cosmic law of ageing and death. Consequently, suffering is inherent in human existence. But *tṛṣṇā* or desire, as such, is not unethical; it is amoral, it is inherent in nature. In fact, many of the desires spring from the most fundamental and natural instincts of all living species. Ontology, therefore, provides the framework of the Buddhist view of life and of the goal of human endeavour. It may have a bearing on Buddhist ethics but is not in itself ethical. In fact, ethical discipline is not an essential pre-requisite for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, for bringing about a cessation of the life process and hence of transmigration; it is, however, essential for attaining a superior and happier existence in the *bhavasāgara*, ocean of existence.

Thus Buddhism distinguishes between cosmic evil, the evil of flux, of decay and death inherent in human existence and the *karmic* evil which is the product of a man's volition. Thus, dishonest conduct like falsehood, theft and injury to life are evil acts which bring evil results to their doer. Perhaps for the first time, Buddhist ethics recognised the intimate relationship between ends and the means to achieve them, the quality of means being determined by the intent of the doer. Thus Buddhist ethics is essentially psychogenic—volitional. Ethics is, however, not the means of escape from the cosmic "evil", transitoriness and perpetual change, the cycle of births and deaths. It is *jñāna*, knowledge, detachment born of knowledge and suppression of *tṛṣṇā* (desire) and renunciation that provide escape.

Thus the Buddhist law of *karma* was, as already observed, inexorable and remorseless in its operation. There could be no escape from it. God as a Creator and Controller of the universe had no place or role in it. In fact, this law of *karma* was a serious challenge to the belief in an omnipotent and compassionate Creator. If God is considered to be omnipotent, he should be in a position to modify the operation of the law and exempt beings from the consequences of *karma*. Capacity to act on one's discretion is an essential quality of absolute sovereignty. Again, if God is the Creator of this universe, it follows that he is the author of both good and evil. This raises grave doubts about the moral responsibility of an individual for his acts and therefore for their consequences.

This law was also an attack on a culture based on sacrifices (*yajña*). Such sacrifices were useless in securing material benefits.

The Buddha warns the followers of the noble path against attending sacrifices involving slaughter of goats, sheep and cows<sup>10</sup> (*Saṃyutta i*, 75) and avers that worship of Agni (fire) for a hundred years is inferior to paying homage for one moment to a

pure or enlightened soul<sup>11</sup> (Dhammapada 106, 107).

Likewise, *tapas* or penance was futile in overcoming evil. In his First Sermon at Benares, while expounding the Middle Way, the Buddha had emphasised that self-mortification or austerities are "unworthy and unprofitable"<sup>12</sup> (*Saṃyutta* V, 420) and that the learned Brahmins might "ply ascetic practices for a century", yet they would not be able to attain liberation<sup>13</sup> (*Saṃyutta* i, 28). What mattered was self-control born of ethical discipline.

The Buddhist doctrine of *karma* was, comparatively speaking, the most rational and the most convincing explanation of the inequalities among men and of the problem of happiness and suffering they experience. Its rationality almost eclipsed that of the teachings of other schools concerning an individual's personal conduct in society. It found ready acceptance, especially because the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* had already prepared the ground for such an ethic.

But a doctrine that provided no escape to an erring individual would be unacceptable to the majority of mankind. The need for forgiveness, for atonement and escape, is deeply ingrained in human nature and became compelling once it came to be accepted that there is a moral order and any violation thereof is visited by punishment. In this context, the rival schools emphasised that performance of sacrifices (*yajña*) could neutralise and the practice of penances (*tapas*) could nullify sins. *Prāyaścitta* (expiation) and pilgrimages were only variants of these techniques to modify the operation of the law of *karma*.

More importantly, however, the non-Buddhist schools, for their sheer survival, cultivated and developed the doctrine of grace, of *avatāras* (incarnations) and of *bhakti* as a means of salvation. Through the grace of God or His *avatāra*, God could redeem his *bhaktas* (devotees). Through *bhakti* or surrender, one can invoke God's mercy to absolve a person from his sins and attain *mokṣa* or salvation. This was the Hindu response to the Buddhist challenge.

The Buddhist doctrine of *karma* for the same considerations, gave encouragement to the cult of expiatory rites as a means of escape from *karma*.

Thus, the Hindu schools, while accepting wholeheartedly the doctrine of *karma* and *ahimsā*, subtly modified *karma* by retaining the belief in sacrifices (without slaughter of animals), in the practice of *tapas* and above all by cultivating the doctrine of grace and *avatāras*. They thus saved the belief in God from being extinguished.

Literary records provide evidence of the radical difference between the Vedas and Epics on the one hand, and the Buddhist texts on the other. The theory of *karma* is heterogeneous in the former but homogeneous in the latter and the two are materially different in content.

As is well known, the doctrine of *karma* is not well-developed in the Vedas. Originally it meant 'ritual act'; only in the *Upaniṣads* does it come to connote 'moral act' and the result of action.<sup>14</sup> The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XII 9.17, speaks of retribution for evil acts in later life. It should be noted that the doctrine of transmigration of soul, *punarjāṇma*, rebirth, is essential to the doctrine of *karma*; the soul which does an evil act must survive after bodily death to bear the consequences of its *karma*, acts. This doctrine of *punarjāṇma* is absent from the *Rigveda*<sup>15</sup>. It is only in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV. 4.5 that we find a statement that a man of good deeds is born in a good state and a man of evil deeds in an evil state. Again, in Chāndogya

Upaniṣad V. 10.7.8, it is said that those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain a good rebirth as a Brahmin, a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya. Those whose conduct has been evil will attain an evil birth either as a dog, or as a hog or as a *caṇḍāla*. Louis Renou<sup>16</sup>, however, has pointed out that "There are isolated passages in the Upaniṣads in which the word *karma* is used in the sense of a good or bad action on the moral plane; but it is never used for the present effect of a past action or the foreseeable consequence of an action performed in the present, the conception which constitutes the essential meaning of the word in later usage." But in the Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 11.15, a son is said to inherit the deeds or actions (and therefore the fate) of his father. In the Rāmāyaṇa<sup>17</sup>, the evils that Lord Rāma and Sītā have to face and overcome—his unjust exclusion from the throne of Ayodhyā, his banishment to the forests for 14 years for no fault of his own, the abduction of Sītā and her second banishment—are nowhere explained as the consequences of evil acts done by them in their previous births. Likewise, in the Mahābhārata (Mbh) (B.C. 400-A.D. 400), the great conflict and the evils which the great heroes have to face are not explained as retributive justice. On the other hand, the ignoble or dishonourable acts of the heroes, including Kṛiṣṇa, are applauded as *dharmacchalam*.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, there are contradictions within the Mahābhārata on the doctrine of *karma*. Sometimes it maintains that each man is squarely responsible for his actions and that these are not shared by any one else, Mbh XII, 29, 22; that "what one does, that the doer alone enjoys" Mbh XII, 153, 4; that "there is no determining power in fate", Mbh XIII, 6, 47. On the other hand Mbh XII 32, 12 divides the responsibility among the Lord, man himself, luck and *karma*. Fate, as Time, undermines the theory of *karma*. In Mbh XII 224, 16 and 226, 13 and 21, we have "The deed causes the deed, but the deed has another creator, Fate, Time, Fate or what will be is the cause." "Sorrow lies in thinking 'I am responsible', for I do that which ordainers ordained when I was born". "Whatever state one obtains, he must say '*havītavayam*' it was fated to be, that is independently of *karma*."

The theory of *karma* as postulated in the Gītā (B.C. 500-B.C. 200) is essentially philosophical in character. While it does speak of *puṇya* and *pāpa karma*, it classifies *karma* as *sāttvika* (devoid of attachment and without any thought of the fruits of action), *rājasika* (born of attachment and desire and intended for attainment of objectives), and *tāmasika* (born of attachment or passion and disregarding the consequences of action for self and others). The Gītā seeks to achieve freedom from the bondage of actions bearing both good and evil results by the *yoga* of renunciation. It recognises that we cannot attain liberation by renouncing activities (III.4). In fact, it accepts that no human being can stop doing acts even for a moment of time (III.5). That is why it says that we have the right to act, but not in expectation of the fruits of that act (*Karmaṇaiva adhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana*. Gītā II.47). In brief, it teaches the doctrine of *phalattīṣṇāvairāgya*, renunciation of the fruits of action. It therefore maintains that those who perform action with attachment according to the Vedic injunctions and perform *yajñas* but avoid sinful activity (*pāpa*) go to heaven (IX, 20), but are reborn in the mortal world when their stock of merit (*puṇya*) is exhausted; they are subject to rebirth and death (IX, 21) and thus do not attain liberation.

The Gītā also propounds the doctrine of salvation through the grace of God. In



XVIII, 14, the *Gītā*, *inter alia*, recognises *daiva*, the imponderable and 'divine factor, as influencing human destiny. This is not consistent with the classical doctrine of *karma*, which operates inexorably and which cannot accommodate any arbitrary interference by the Divine or the operation of an irrational force.

It also maintains that a person does act under the compulsion of *guṇas* born of *prakṛti*. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, 'you are fettered by your *karma*, which is born of your own nature' (III.5) 'All actions, truly speaking, are born of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, though, due to delusion, a person thinks that he is their author.' (III.27). This denies free will and consequently moral responsibility.

Thus, the doctrine of *karma* in the *Gītā* is philosophical and religious but not essentially ethical. It precludes man's thinking of the fruits of action because these fruits are unpredictable and cannot be related to the quality of our acts: morally good acts do not necessarily produce materially good results. Nor is a man morally responsible for his acts, as he is not a free agent. Consequently, there is no validity of a moral or ethical relationship between cause and effect, between acts and their consequences.

Jainism, in common with other Indian religions, holds that *karma*, more precisely *sañcita karma*, or accumulated merits and demerits, condition a man's life in the present and future. But the Jaina doctrine of *karma* shows significant difference from the doctrine of other schools.

Jainism considers *karma* to be material in nature; its influx into a pure soul causes defilement. The consequences of *karma* are produced irrespective of the intent of the doer. In other words, intention or volition is not relevant to the ripening of the *karma*. Inadvertent transgressions are not sterile in producing their effects and new *karma*. Even if an act, such as injury or destruction of life, is accidental, its consequences must be borne. *Karma*, in Jainism, is thus indifferent to the morality of our volitions or desires leading to acts. The Jaina law of *karma* is thus more mechanical than ethical; unattached actions and attached actions are identical in the consequences they produce. "All actions produce *karma*, and in the majority of the cases entail on the doer the continuance of wordly existence."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the highest goal is to get rid of all *karma*<sup>20</sup> (*nirjara*) and meanwhile to acquire no new *karma* by stopping the *āśravas* (in-flow) of *karma*.

This is in sharp contradistinction to the Buddhist dogma that "an act is essentially action that can be morally qualified.....Mental acts are acts *par excellence*, inasmuch as there is no act without mental action."<sup>21</sup> In the *Majjhima Nikāya*<sup>22</sup> i,373, the Buddha says that of the three kinds of acts of demerit, of deed, word, and mind, those of the mind are the most criminal in effecting and starting demerit, and the other two are less criminal. In the *Anguttara Nikāya*<sup>23</sup> ii,232, the Buddha states that planned (or intentional) harmful action of body, speech and thought is the source of dark deeds. Again in the *Anguttara Nikāya*<sup>24</sup> v,292 the Buddha avers: "I declare..... that of intentional deeds done and accumulated there can be no wiping out without experiencing the result thereof and that too.....either in the same visible state or in some other state here-after....."

In Buddhist philosophy, however, *karma* or conduct is a causative factor in creation; this is called *vipākahetu*<sup>25</sup>, or moral causation as distinct from causation in the inanimate and organic world. It is the operation of past deeds that influence and

mould automatically and involuntarily the destiny of an individual in this life and in the life thereafter.

In the *Milindapañha*<sup>26</sup> (1 century A.D.), 65.12, the inequalities among human beings are explained as being due to their respective *karma*: ".....it is through a difference in their *karma* that men are not all alike, but some long-lived, and some short-lived, some healthy and some sickly, some handsome and some ugly, some powerful and some weak, some rich and some poor, some of high degree and some of low degree, some wise and some foolish.....*Karma* allots beings to meanness and greatness." In the doctrinal literature, the doctrine of *karma*, involving individual responsibility, is more clearly set out. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*<sup>27</sup> iii,1,4 it is said :

"His good deeds and his wickedness,  
Whatever a mortal does while here,  
'Tis this that he can call his own,  
This with him take as he goes hence,  
This is what follows after him,  
And like a shadow never departs."

Again, the *Anguttara Nikāya*<sup>28</sup> v,288-291, states that "beings are responsible for their deeds, kinsmen of their deeds, to them their deeds come home again. Whatsoever deed they do.....of that thing they are the heirs".

The *Dhammapada*<sup>29</sup> makes a categorical statement on this point : "By oneself evil is done, by oneself one suffers. By oneself evil is undone, by oneself one is purified" (165). Again, "Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, nor anywhere else on earth is there a spot where a man may be freed from (the consequences) of an evil deed" (128). *Milindapañha*<sup>30</sup> II, 2,6 likewise explains that although the name and form which is born in the next existence is different from the name and form which is 'to end at death', nevertheless it springs from it, and is therefore not freed from its evil deeds." *Asvaghosa*, in the *Buddhacarita* XX. 32 states that : *Yā kartā So hi bhoktā ; syatkarmanastu phalam dhruvam* ; 'The doer indeed bears the fruit of his action ; and the result of action is unalterable.'

The doctrine of *karma* and the practice of *sīla* by householders is glorified in the metrical portion of the *Jātakas*<sup>31</sup> (3rd Century B.C.), which rank first in the chronology of the different parts of a *jātaka*. These stories served as incentives to good deeds. They deal with *saggakathā* (exposition of the way to heaven), *śīlakathā* (exposition of the norms of conduct) and *dānakathā* (exposition of charity). They emphasise the virtues of truthfulness and charity as the pathway to heaven.<sup>32</sup> The Buddhist doctrine of *karma* is also illustrated in the *Avadānas* (2nd Century A.D.). *Avadāna śataka* in 55 verses in different stories and *Divyavadāna* in verses 2,19;10,1;11,7;13,10;19,15;21,3;35,7;37,69, and 70 reiterate that *karmas* do not perish even after the elapse of a million of years. They fructify without fail when the time and environment are suitable. "These stories are, as a rule, intended to show that black deeds bear black fruits and white deeds white fruits; there are also stories which show how the actions of one existence are very closely connected with those of former or future existences"<sup>33</sup>. They illustrate "the paramount and coercive power"<sup>34</sup> of the law of *karma*.

As a reaction and counterpoise to the powerful exposition of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* in the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*, the *Purāṇas*<sup>35</sup> came into existence in Hinduism,

They accept the doctrine of *karma*, of sin and retribution therefor. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa<sup>36</sup>, XIV, 17 (3rd century A.D.), states : “.....no human action, whether virtuous or sinful, quickly cleanses except by consumption. Diminution arises through consumption. ....”. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam<sup>37</sup> 3, XXXI (6th century A.D.), the supreme embodiment of the doctrine of grace, maintains that “the result of the acts done in former birth owes its form to the divine agency. As such, the body of the being in future birth is due to the results of the acts done in former birth.....”. The Nārada Purāṇa<sup>38</sup>, I. 29,18 (A.D. 875-1000), emphasises that one has to bear the consequences of one’s action whether good or ill. The Garuḍa Purāṇa<sup>39</sup> (A.D. 800-1050), points out that “A man is the creator of his fate and even in the foetal life, he is afflicted by the dynamics of the works of his prior existence..... a man cannot fly from the effects of his prior deeds.” The Padmapurāṇa<sup>40</sup>, II.81.48 and II.94.17.18 (A.D. 900-1400), states that no one can set aside the bondage due to the *karma* of past lives..... no man in the world is able to annul the effects of actions done in previous existences.

Thus, the acceptance of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* by Hinduism was total. But this did not mean that it discarded its beliefs in various expedients to mitigate the operation of this law. The Purāṇas modify its operation by extolling the benefits of penances, *prāyaścitta* or expiation, pilgrimages to *tīrthas* or sacred places, *vratas* (religious observances), *dāna* (charity) and *śrāddhas* (rites in honour of the manes). It is significant that these topics or themes form the bulk of the contents of the Purāṇas. It is also significant that unlike the Vedas, the Purāṇas are available to persons of low caste, viz. *śūdras*, and to women. Hinduism thus faced the challenge of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma*, which it accepted without giving up its own theology and doctrine of expiation of sins, notwithstanding the apparent inconsistencies between them.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the doctrines of *punya parinamhā* (transference of merit) and of the *Bodhisattva mahāsattva*, who renounces *nirvāṇa* again and again to bring deliverance to suffering humanity, were patently inconsistent with the teachings of the Buddha. They necessarily implied a serious modification of the law of *karma*. These were the Buddhist versions of the Hindu doctrines of grace and *avatāras* (incarnations) and were in the nature a compromise the Buddhists were forced to make to meet the counter-attack of Hinduism.

## NOTES

1. R.N. Dandekar : *Some Aspects of the History of Hinduism*. Poona, University of Poona, 1967, p. 38. Louis Renou : *Vedic India*. Calcutta, Susil Gupta, 1957§ 116 p. 58.
2. Renou: *ibid*§ 115, p. 58. The term *prāyaścitta* meant ‘expiations’ provided in case of error concerning instrument, place or time, honorarium, officiant or wife, fault of inattention (omission, alteration, performance of acts or recitation of formulae in a wrong order), or accident (extinction of fire or breaking of a utensil.....)” Renou : *ibid*, § 218 p. 111.
3. R.N. Dandekar : *ibid*, p.70 and p. 62.
4. R.T.H. Griffith : (tr) *The Hymns of the Rig Veda*, Vols. I & II, 4th edn, Varanasi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963.

5. Monier Williams : *Indian Wisdom*, 2nd edn, Varanasi Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 1963, p. 17.
6. Monier Williams : *ibid.*, p. 18. *The Atharvaveda* VI, 15.1 repeats this :  
 "From the sins which knowingly or  
 unknowingly we have committed, do ye,  
 all gods, of one accord, release us."  
 M. Bloomfield : *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda, Sacred Books of the East* XLII, 2nd edn., Delhi, Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1967. See also *ibid.*, VI, 45,2 and 45,3.
7. Benjamin Walker (ed) : *Hindu World* Vol. II London, Allen & Unwin, 1968, 'Sins'.
8. Georg Bühler: *Laws of Manu, Sacred Books of the East* Vol. XXV, 2nd edn, Delhi, Motilal Banarsi Dass, reprint 1965.
9. Georg Bühler : *Sacred Laws of the Āryas, Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, Pt. II Delhi, Motilal Banarsi Dass, reprint 1965. See also Viṣṇu LV. 2. (tr) J. Jolly. *Sacred Books of the East* Vol. VII, Delhi, Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Reprint 1965.
10. Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids (tr): *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, Part I, London, Pali Text Society, 1917. Again the Buddha maintains that "any rites austere, aimed at the overthrow of death, belong to matters useless for our good". F.L. Woodward (tr) : *The Book of Kindred Sayings* Part II, 104; 1922.
11. Max Muller (tr) : *The Dhammapada, Sacred Books of the East* Vol. X : Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Reprint 1965.
12. F.L. Woodward : *ibid.*, 1965, See also *ibid.*, i, 12 and i, 31 where he says "Let him not work torment on self that is useless."
13. Mrs. Rhys Davids : *ibid.*
14. Renou : *ibid.*, §. 177.
15. *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* X. 4.3 (tr) Julius Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIII, Second edn, Delhi, Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, 1966, speaks of *punararmtyu*, re-death, which may be deemed to be a variant of the later doctrine of *punarjanma*, rebirth, but is not exactly the same. Jogiraj Basu : *India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas*, Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1969, pp. 232-33, points out that the term *punararmtyu* occurs several times in the *Brāhmaṇas*.
16. Louis Renou : *Religions of India*, New Delhi, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 2nd edn., 1972 pp. 28-29.
17. The banishment of Rāma is attributed to the accidental death of Śravaṇa Kumāra at the hands of Daśaratha, Rāma's father. He was cursed by the bereaved parents of the deceased to die from the pangs of separation of his son because he (Daśaratha) had made them childless.
18. Hopkins : *The Great Epic of India*, New York, Yale University, 1901, p.374-75.
19. J. Jolly, "Jainism" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, Vol. VII., Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1964, 470 (a).
20. Jolly, *ibid.*, p. 470 (a).
21. L. De La Vallee Poussin, *Karma, ibid.*, p. 674 (b).



22. R. Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. I., *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, London, Humphrey Milford, 1926.
23. Woodward, *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, Vol. II, London, Pali Text Society, Reprint, 1952.
24. Woodward, *ibid*, Vol. V, Reprint, 1955, p. 189-192.
25. Th. Stcherbatasky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, 3rd Edition, Calcutta, Susil Gupta, 1961, p. 27-28.
26. H.C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, New York, Atheneum, 1963, p. 215.
27. Warren, *ibid*, p. 214. Again *ibid*, iii, 2, 10 it is said  
 "But every deed a man performs  
 .....  
 Tis this that he can call his own..."  
 Warren, *ibid* p. 228.
28. Woodward, *ibid*, V. p. 187-189.
29. Max Muller (tr), *The Dhammapada. The Sacred Books of the East* Vol. X. Delhi, Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Reprint, 1965. The *Avadānaśataka*, 36, 22, repeats that there is no spot on earth where one can escape from *karma*.
30. T. W. Rhys David (tr), *The Questions of King Milinda. The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXV. Delhi, Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Reprint, 1965.
31. Gokuldas De : *Significance and Importance of Jātakas*, Calcutta University, 1951, pp. 156-157.  
 We feel that De erroneously identifies the teachings of *Jātakas* with *Bhāgavatism*, which is a late phenomenon and the hallmark of which is the doctrine of self-surrender and expiation through *bhakti* and not necessarily through superior *karma*.
32. H. T. Francis and E.J. Thomas, *Jātaka Tales*, Bombay, Jaico, 1957, p. 11.
33. Winternitz. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Vol. II, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1933, p. 277-278.
34. J. S. Spyer (ed), *Avadānacataka*, The Hague, Mouton & Co. 1958, Preface, p. II.
35. A. D. Pusalkar, *Studies in the Epics & Purāṇas*, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1955, Introduction, liv, lvi, lxii.
36. F. E. Pargiter (tr), *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Delhi, Indological Book House, 1969, p. 77.
37. J. M. Sanyal (tr), *Srimad Bhāgavatam*. Vol. 1. Delhi, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 2nd Edition, 1973, p. 269.
38. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastras*, Vol. V, Pt. II, Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, 1962, footnote 2554.
39. Robert O. Bellon, (ed), *The World Pocket Bible*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964, p. 68.
40. Madhava Chimanaji Apté (ed), *Padmapurāṇa*, Poona, Anandasrama, Vol. I, 1872,